**The Thematic Lens**

**"To be truly memorable, a book must have at its core one of life's great quests: the quest for love, truth, or power."**

The thematic lens of paper 2 asks you to examine universal themes/concepts which connect various forms of literature. The discussion of this connection is known as INTERTEXTUALITY.

When considering the thematic lens there are a number of things you need to contemplate:

* The question will often give you a topic or concept to discuss in the novels that you have read for example: Suffering.
* This topic or concept is not a THEME.
* What you must do is explore how the authors of each text discuss this topic and present their message about it.
* THEME = The author’s message about a topic/concept within a text.

Themes are an easy way to examine the author’s intentions – they help to tell us what the author’s purpose is and easily allows you (the student) to respond to criterion C – stylistic devices and the effects on the reader.

Some example paper 2 questions which use the thematic lens:

1. If beauty is a relative term, how do one or more of the works you have studied explore this idea?
2. How does a particular term or concept, such as childhood, change in the way it is represented in the texts you have studied?
3. 'Coming of age' is a common theme in literary works. With regards to at least two literary works, explain how the author's own youth influenced their portrayal of this theme.

**Identifying themes in the texts**

When discussing themes you need to consider the work holistically (as a whole). A number of ideas, topics or concepts will be repeated throughout the text. These ideas, topics or concepts will help you find the theme of the work and thus the author’s intentions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Topic/idea/concept | Where is this topic evident in the text? | What is the author’s purpose? What is the author trying to achieve through the discussion of this topic? | How does this topic impact the reader – refer to specific events where this topic alienated or seduced the reader. |
|  |  |  |  |

Now bring this all together and write a declarative statement where you incorporate the topic, the author’s purpose and the intended impact on the reader. Once you have written this statement you have identified a theme.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Remember that there will be a number of themes within each work. For paper 2 you will need to know what these themes are; preparation is your key to success here.

Furthermore, in a paper 2 you will need to discuss how themes transcend and connect works (INTERTEXTUALITY). This act will be more complicated. Firstly you need to consider that the same topics, ideas and concepts will be discussed, however the author’s purpose and intended impact on the reader will most likely be different.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Topic/idea/concept | Text 1 - | Text 2 - |
|  | Authors purpose- | Author’s purpose- |
| Impact on the reader- | Impact on the reader - |

As you have done previously you will need to write a statement which states the theme identified in both texts. Remember it is likely that the author’s purpose and impact on the reader is different – therefore you will need to use connectives to demonstrate to the examiner the similarities and differences in the themes.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

These statements if practised and written out could provide you with the statements or topic sentences for your body (depending on the question in your exam) .

Some connectives to support contrasting and comparing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Comparison | * Equally * In the same way * Likewise * When compared with * Similarly |
| Contrasting | * Alternatively * Whereas * Instead of * However in * In contrast to |